

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14269

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: TGEN PINT SENV UR US
SUBJECT: US-USSR ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT (02.00) SOVIET LINKAGE
OF COOPERATION TO POLITICAL PROBLEMS

REFS: (A) MOSCOW 11338, (B) MOSCOW 10376

1. SCICOUNS MET SEPTEMBER 27 WITH HYDROMET DIRECTOR
IZRAEL', FOR DISCUSSIONS OF FORTHCOMING JCM. ALSO
PRESENT AT MEETING WERE VG NOVOZHILOV,
ASSISTANT FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, HYDROMET,
AND YU YE KAZAKOV, SOVIET EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE AGREEMENT. TOWARDS CONCLUSION OF MEETING, SCI
COUNS STATED THERE HAD BEEN TWO RECENT INCIDENTS IN
WHICH HYDROMET OFFICIALS HAD LINKED BILATERAL POLITICAL
DIFFERENCES TO THE CONTINUATION OF COOPERATION UNDER
THE AGREEMENT. SCICOUNS STATED THAT SINCE THESE
WERE MADE TO US OFFICIALS, THESE COMMENTS NECESSARILY
HAD TO BE REPORTED TO WASHINGTON. THE U.S. HAS
CONSTANTLY STRIVEN TO KEEP THE TECHNICAL BILATERALS
AS APOLITICAL AS POSSIBLE, AND WHILE WE HAVE OBVIOUS
DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON POLITICS THE BILATERALS SERVE
A HIGHLY USEFUL PURPOSE IN BROADENING AND
DEEPENING AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND CONCERN. WHILE
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THE POLITICAL CLIMATE BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES
IS SUBJECT TO FLUCTUATIONS, THE TECHNICAL BILATERALS
SHOULD SERVE AS A BALLAST OF BUSINESS-LIKE EXCHANGES
ON MATTERS OF AGREED MUTUAL INTEREST. THE STATEMENTS
WE HAVE HEARD RECENTLY FROM HYDROMET OFFICIALS WERE
NOT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF EITHER COUNTRY.

2. IZRAEL' APPEARED GENUINELY SURPRISED AND RESPONDED THAT WHILE COOPERATION ON ENVIRONMENT CANNOT BE TOTALLY DIVORCED FROM POLITICAL MATTERS, HE HAD WORKED FOR FIVE YEARS WITH RUSSELL TRAIN WITHOUT POLITICS EVER BEING RAISED AS AN ISSUE, AND THAT HIS FIRST MEETING WITH EPA ADMINISTRATOR COSTLE PROCEEDED IN A PERFECTLY AMICABLE MANNER. IZRAEL' ADDED THAT NATURALLY THERE HAD BEEN PROBLEMS OVER THE YEARS, BUT THAT THESE WERE OF A TECHNICAL OR ADMINISTRATIVE NATURE -- NEVER TO HIS KNOWLEDGE POLITICAL. NOVOZHILOV INTERJECTED AT THIS POINT A REFERENCE TO HIS CONVERSATION WITH FSO SHAUN BYRNES (REFTEL A) STATING THAT BYRNES HAD COME TO HYDROMET TO INSIST ON A U.S. DELEGATION BEING RECEIVED IN TOMSK -- A CLOSED CITY. SUCH MATTERS ARE INDEED POLITICAL. NOVOZHILOV SEEMED RATHER AGITATED IN MAKING THIS STATEMENT, AND KAZAKOV (WHO HAD LECTURED HOSTAL DURING JULY MID-YEAR REVIEW) WAS NOTABLY SILENT. SCICOUNS RESPONDED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL TO NAME INDIVIDUALS OR DISCUSSIONS SPECIFICALLY BUT REITERATED LINKAGE OF POLITICS TO THE BILATERALS ARE NOT USEFUL. MEETING CLOSED WITH THE USUAL EXCHANGE OF CORDIALITIES, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF NOVOZHILOV, WHO LEFT THE MEETING ROOM IN HASTE.

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EM COMMENT: WE TEND TO BELIEVE IZRAEL'S AVOWAL OF INNOCENCE WITH REGARD TO LECTURE OF U.S. OFFICIALS ON POLITICAL MATTERS. FSO BYRNES RECALLS THAT MATTER OF U.S. DELEGATION ACCESS TO TOMSK WAS ONE OF LONG LIST OF ITEMS DISCUSSED AT HYDROMET MEETING AUGUST 4 AND THAT NOVOZHILOV DID NOT TAKE PART IN HIS NEGOTIATIONS ON ON-GOING ENVIRONMENT BUSINESS. ONLY AFTER BUSINESS PART OF MEETING WAS CONCLUDED DID NOVOZHILOV BEGIN HIS DIATRIBE. NOVOZHILOV'S BEHAVIOUR DURING SEPTEMBER 27 MEETING TENDS TO CONFIRM THE EMBASSY'S VIEW OF THIS KGB ASSOCIATION. END COMMENT.
MATLOCK

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